Claims

Claims 1-5. (Canceled)

Claim 6. (New) A decoding device for analyzing communication protocols, the decoding device having an input for receiving coded data and an output for providing decoded data, comprising:

a generic decoder into which a limited number of protocol descriptions are loaded, the protocol descriptions being interpreted by the generic decoder during operation of the decoding device to convert the coded data at the input to the decoded data at the output; and

a specific decoder adapted to interpret a specific protocol, wherein a specific function of the generic decoder is overlaid by a corresponding function of the specific decoder so the corresponding function is interpreted by the generic decoder.

Claim 7. (New) The decoding device as recited in claim 6 wherein the generic and specific decoders are reversibly connected so each decoder is modifiable separately from the other.

Claim 8. (New) A method of setting up a decoding device comprising the steps of:

providing a generic decoder into which a limited number of protocol descriptions are loaded, the protocol descriptions being interpreted by the generic decoder to convert coded data at an input into decoded data at an output;

providing a specific decoder adapted to interpret a specific protocol;

connecting the specific and generic decoders to form the decoding device; and

overlaying a specific function of the generic decoder with a corresponding function of the specific decoder so the corresponding function is interpreted by the generic decoder.

Claim 9. (New) The method as recited in claim 8 wherein the connecting step comprises the step of reversibly connecting the specific and generic decoders so each decoder is modifiable separately from the other.